

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

11 GAY L. JOHNSON,

CASE NO. 07-0233-W(LSP)

12 Plaintiff,

ORDER GRANTING IN PART  
AND DENYING IN PART  
DEFENDANT'S REQUEST  
FOR ATTORNEYS FEES

13 || v.

14 LPL FINANCIAL SERVICES

Defendant.

17 On July 25, 2007, the Court conducted a Settlement Conference  
18 in this action, at which a settlement was achieved. As part of the  
19 settlement, the parties consented to the jurisdiction of the  
20 undersigned to decide, *inter alia*, all disputes regarding settlement  
21 terms arising during the documentation thereof not resolved by the  
22 parties themselves. The parties also agreed that any decision by  
23 the undersigned with regard to the undersigned's decision regarding  
24 settlement terms, would be final, binding and non-appealable.

25 On August 31, 2007, Plaintiff's counsel informed the Court by  
26 letter that a dispute had arisen between the parties regarding the  
27 proper issuance of IRS Form 1099s after payment of the agreed  
28 settlement amount (hereafter "IRS dispute").

1       On September 5, 2007, Defendant's counsel responded via letter  
2 to Plaintiff's counsel's August 31, 2007 letter.<sup>1</sup> On October 4,  
3 2007, Plaintiff's counsel responded to Defendant's counsel's  
4 September 5, 2007 letter.

5       On October 9, 2007, the Court ordered Plaintiff's and  
6 Defendant's counsel to appear for a hearing regarding the IRS  
7 dispute. In the October 9, 2007 Order, the Court stated:

8           To the extent a party has taken a clearly erroneous  
9 position regarding the IRS issues raised in Plaintiff's  
10 letter brief of August 31, 2007, Defendant's letter  
11 brief of September 5, 2007 and Plaintiff's letter  
brief of October 4, 2007, that party shall be ordered  
to pay the other party's expenses in litigating the  
issues discussed in those letter briefs.

12      On October 10, 2007, the hearing was held. Plaintiff's and  
13 Defendant's counsel attended the hearing. At the hearing,  
14 Plaintiff's counsel recognized that the position he held, as stated  
15 in his August 31 and October 4, 2007 letters, was erroneous.

16      At the October 10, 2007 hearing, Defendant's counsel requested  
17 that Plaintiff pay Defendant's attorneys fees incurred in litigating  
18 the IRS dispute. The Court ordered that Defendant file a  
19 declaration stating the time and fees incurred in researching and  
20 litigating the dispute.

21      On October 17, 2007, the Court issued a written Order Regarding  
22 Form 1099 Issuing Requirements After Payment of Settlement. The  
23 October 17, 2007 Order found Defendant's position to be correct.

24      On October 16, 2007, Defendant's counsel submitted the  
25 declaration, as ordered. On October 31, 2007, Plaintiff's counsel

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27           <sup>1</sup>The Court notes that prior to August 31, 2007, Plaintiff's and Defendant's  
28 counsel engaged in numerous discussions via e-mail regarding the IRS dispute.  
Defendant's counsel's September 5, 2007 letter includes as exhibits numerous e-  
mails between counsel regarding the dispute.

1 submitted a Reply to Defendant's counsel's declaration.

2 Thereafter, the Court requested that Defendant's counsel submit  
3 to it *in camera*, a supplemental declaration containing Defendant's  
4 counsel's unredacted billing statements regarding the IRS dispute.  
5 On November 26, 2007, Defendant's counsel submitted to the Court *in*  
6 *camera*, a Supplemental Declaration, attached to which were  
7 unredacted billing statements regarding the IRS dispute.  
8 Plaintiff's counsel was served with a redacted copy of Defendant's  
9 counsel's billing statements. On November 30, 2007, Plaintiff's  
10 counsel filed a Supplemental Reply to the Supplemental Declaration  
11 of Defendant's counsel.

12 The Court, having reviewed the letters, briefs, declarations of  
13 counsel, and billing statements, and GOOD CAUSE APPEARING, HEREBY  
14 ORDERS:

15 It is clear to the Court that by late August 2007, or by early  
16 September 2007, the parties could have resolved the IRS dispute. If  
17 the parties had done so, it is unlikely that Defendant would have  
18 sought its attorneys fees incurred in litigating the dispute.

19 Therefore, taking into account the events starting in early  
20 September 2007, the approach each party utilized in resolving the  
21 dispute and the expenses incurred by Defendant in establishing its  
22 position with regard to the dispute, the Court ORDERS that Plaintiff  
23 pay Defendant the sum of \$8,610.00 (including costs), for attorneys  
24 fees and costs incurred in litigating the IRS dispute.

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1 Payment of Defendant's attorneys fees, as ordered herein, is  
2 stayed until either the settlement agreed to by the parties is  
3 confirmed, or a final judgment is entered.

4 IT IS SO ORDERED.

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6 DATED: December 27, 2007

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Hon. Leo S. Papas  
U.S. Magistrate Judge

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